

Editors' Note

Welcome to *JASAL* 8, the first number to be put together by a 'new' editorial team. We would like to start by acknowledging the work of Philip Mead, who undertook the co-editorship of *JASALs* 5 to 7, firstly with Barbara Milech, and then with Susan Lever. Philip has been a major contributor amongst the small group who have been instrumental in establishing and consolidating *JASAL* as a significant presence in the field of Australian literary and cultural studies.

Evidence of *JASAL's* status has been provided by the recent journal ranking exercise undertaken by Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA), based on the assessments of relevant disciplinary specialists. That *JASAL* was ranked as a level 'A' journal, ahead of a number of more established titles, is testimony to the consistently high standards of content and editing that have been achieved in a remarkably short period. With the continued support of authors, peer reviewers and readers, we look forward to *JASAL* not only consolidating this position, but eventually obtaining one of the elusive A+ rankings (restricted to approximately 5% of journals in each discipline grouping).

As the result of discussion at the ASAL executive meetings held this year several important decisions have been made about the production of *JASAL*. Firstly, there will be two issues per year. This has varied in recent years between one and three, depending on the amount of acceptable copy, but it is believed that it will be in the best interests of authors, editors and readers if the publishing frequency is regularised. As readers will be aware, in 2007 and 2008 a 'Special issue' of *JASAL* has appeared based on papers given at the Association's annual conference from the previous year, and edited by the conference convenors. It is intended that this will continue, and the convenors of the 2008 Wollongong conference (Wenche Ommundsen, Tony Simoes Da Silva and Jennifer Phillips) are currently engaged in this work. These conference-based issues of *JASAL* will continue to be designated as a 'Special Issue' and should be published prior to the conference in the following year. In addition, we will also publish the 'regular' numbered issue (such as this one), which will be published late in each calendar year.

The editorial cycle will, however, be continuous. That is, articles submitted for the regular issues can be submitted at any time and will immediately be sent for review and (upon acceptance) subsequent editing. When this process has been completed they will be made accessible on the *JASAL* website in advance of appearing in the printed issue. ASAL members will receive an email informing them of the addition of new papers to the journal's website. In this way we hope to make papers available for reading as soon as possible, thereby encouraging rapid response and citation from readers.

ASAL members will continue to receive printed copies of both *JASAL* issues as part of their membership, and the Executive has confirmed that the Association will continue to support both the electronic and printed versions of the journal.

JASAL 8 includes an impressively diverse range of articles. This diversity is evidenced in part by the range of subject matter, with single author studies focusing on writers as different as Rosa Praed, Xavier Herbert, David Foster, Gail Jones and Ned Kelly(!). It is also pleasing to be able to publish Rosalind Smith's article on true crime writing, a popular genre which has been badly neglected by critics, despite—as Smith argues—'the centrality of true crime and its narration to formations of Australian national identity'. Diversity is also apparent in the source of the articles, with contributions from some of our most senior scholars in Robert Dixon, Susan Lever and Frances Devlin-Glass; and 'newer voices' in recent postgraduates Emily Bitto and Michael Farrell. We are confident that this issue will provide something for everybody!

As always we are indebted to our book reviewers for their substantial contribution to the journal and the peer reviewers who report on each submission, and Michael Birch for his assistance in pulling this issue together.

Susan Lever, Tanya Dalziell & Paul Genoni